

McGrath Native Village Council
Large Clinic Conceptual Planning Quarterly Report
January – March 2003

NARRATIVE REPORT

SUMMARY OF PROJECT STATUS

The McGrath Native Village Council continues in its efforts to gain site control and to identify and acquire matching funds for construction. This quarter brought four new council members to the McGrath Native Village Council (MNVC) and a new Tribal Administrator. A contractor has been hired to conduct planning meetings and to write the Denali Commission business plan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

The project is behind schedule but on budget. This is due primarily to the fact that negotiations for land acquisition have been on and off with the owner of the preferred lots next to McGrath's Chamai Center. Turnover of the MNVC Tribal Administrator also brought to a temporary halt the process of planning for non-clinic space needs and for matching fund proposal development.

There have been repeated efforts to negotiate land swap with the owner of two lots adjacent to the Chamai Center in McGrath. Negotiations were complicated by the need to move a cabin, and demolish another structure as part of the land swap. Pricing for these activities took some time. At the informal level, the owner was in agreement. A letter of agreement was submitted to the owner in late March but it is reported that he has changed his mind after seeing the formal proposal. The tribal administrator has not been able to confirm the owner's position personally so we are still up in the air as to whether or not he will sign the agreement. A formal declination has not been received. The former 2nd Chief of McGrath, James Vanderpool, is still assisting the MNVC with this effort and will also be trying to confirm the land swap status with the owner.

Tamara Vanderpool was hired as the new MNVC Tribal Administrator on February 26, 2003. She hired Elaine Hussen in February as a contract consultant, Ms. Hussen will assist with planning, and development of the business plan. As the former Rural Health Director for TCC, Ms. Hussen assisted the MNVC in developing their initial proposal to the Denali Commission. She is also familiar with TCC services and the subregional health care delivery system, and holds an M.S. in Health Systems Administration.

On March 20th, the consultant provided an orientation and project status report on the clinic replacement project for new MNVC council members. This included an overview of the Denali Commission, Large Clinic Replacement funding phases, and the requirements for each phase of funding. Financing and space planning requirements for both clinic and non-clinic space was also presented.

On March 27th, the consultant participated in a radio interview for airing on the local public radio station, KSKO. This interview was intended to update the community on the plans and progress of the MNVC in replacing the McGrath Health Center. Additional interviews/and or call in shows will be held as appropriate to keep the local community informed. Preliminary discussions have been held with KSKO radio staff on doing a radiothon fundraiser to demonstrate local support for the new clinic. Although funds raised for construction match through this means are expected to be insignificant, it will show local commitment to other potential match funders.

Planning to identify local non-clinic space needs has begun. In mid-April, a series of meetings will be held by the consultant to help determine the interest in and need for construction of non-clinic space. Meetings are planned with TCC, operator of the current clinic services; with the City of McGrath; with all tenants in the existing Chamai Center; with 4-Rivers Counseling Services (in May); and with the McGrath Fire Chief and the local EMS squad leader. One of the MNVC council members has been invited to participate in these planning sessions. Planning for clinic services and clinic space needs was largely completed as part of TCC's 330 HRSA grant planning last summer, and through a region wide health needs assessment conducted in 1998. TCC has provided a verbal commitment that the scope of services has not changed since the original 330 proposal was funded in September, 2002. Another resolution has been requested from TCC to reaffirm their staffing plan and commitment to providing needed information.

Review of HUD's ICDBG requirements shows that an income survey is needed for the entire subregion and it is questionable as to whether or not survey findings will support a clinic construction matching funds. Other sources of matching funds will be researched as a subregional salary survey will be fairly labor intensive and the tribal administrator is still learning the nuances of managing all the MNVC projects, contracts and grants.

A Letter of Inquiry was submitted to the Rasmusson Foundation for matching funds on January 3, 2003. A response has not yet been received, although a phone call confirmed that the letter arrived at the foundation office.